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The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security

Consideration of effective measures to enhance the protection, security and safety of diplomatic and consular missions and representatives

Letter dated 15 September 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to bring to your attention the statement by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on Afghanistan/the Islamic Republic of Iran, issued on 11 September 1998 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(Signed) Ernst **Sucharipa**
Permanent Representative of Austria
to the United Nations

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Annex

[Original: English and French]

Statement on Afghanistan/the Islamic Republic of Iran issued on 11 September 1998 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union

The European Union has learned with dismay of the killing of Iranian diplomats during recent fighting at Mazar-i-Sharif in northern Afghanistan, and expresses its condolences to the bereaved families and to the Government and people of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The European Union condemns these inhuman acts and the violation of the Vienna diplomatic and consular conventions. The European Union calls for an urgent investigation into these crimes and a consequent indictment of those responsible. The European Union calls upon the Taliban for full cooperation to ensure the release and safe return of the remaining diplomats and other Iranian nationals still missing in Afghanistan. The European Union notes the statement of the Taliban that the bodies will be returned to the Islamic Republic of Iran and that the perpetrators will be brought to justice.

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Human rights questions

Letter dated 15 September 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to bring to your attention the statement by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on Myanmar, issued on 11 September 1998 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(Signed) Ernst **Sucharipa**
Permanent Representative of Austria
to the United Nations

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Annex

[Original: English and French]

Statement on Myanmar issued on 11 September 1998 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union

The European Union condemns the detention by the authorities of Myanmar of over 100 opposition activists, including over 60 members of Parliament-elect from the National League for Democracy and from ethnic minority parties such as the Shan Nationalities League for Democracy.

The European Union considers this to be an unacceptable violation of their freedom and a step away from democracy.

The European Union calls for an immediate release of all political detainees in Myanmar and for the authorities of Myanmar urgently to enter into a substantive dialogue with opposition parties and to respect the 1990 general election results.

The central and eastern European countries associated with the European Union, the associated country Cyprus and the European Free Trade Association countries members of the European Economic Area align themselves with the present statement.

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Fifty-third session
Agenda item 147
Consideration of effective measures to enhance the protection, security and safety of diplomatic and consular missions and representatives

Letter dated 16 September 1998 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to report that the Taliban offensive forces have attacked, occupied and looted the Consulate-General and the Cultural House of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the city of Bamyan. A local staff member working at the Cultural House was set afire and killed by the Taliban and there is no word on the whereabouts of the rest of the local staff. The Taliban's gross violations of the recognized principles of international law, for a second time, against the diplomatic premises of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Afghanistan, despite the condemnation of their first criminal act in Mazar-e-Sharif by the Security Council, is a clear act of provocation by the Taliban, as well as a display of their contempt for the international community.

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran is seriously concerned about the general situation in Afghanistan and, in particular, about the Iranian nationals held in captivity by the Taliban. The reported mass killing of civilians by the Taliban on ethnic and religious grounds has continued since 8 August 1998 and has now found a serious and tragic dimension in Bamyan, a city largely populated by Shiite Muslims.

In this situation, which has raised international outrage over the Taliban's blatant violation of the very basic rules and principles of international humanitarian law, the leaders of the Taliban have stubbornly displayed no regard whatsoever for the demand by the international community, in particular by the Security Council and the Secretary-General, to stop this carnage. Procrastination and foot-dragging by the Taliban and their foreign supporters, coupled with emphasis on the technicalities of dispatching a fact-finding mission to determine the fate of the Iranian diplomats, which the United Nations felt necessary in context of Afghanistan, led to the situation at hand where all save the Taliban had to condemn and express outrage over the murder. On the other hand, as in the case of the inhuman murder of the Iranian diplomats in Mazar-e-Sharif, Taliban leaders can

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conveniently claim, with a sense of impunity, to have had no knowledge or control over their members when they commit a war crime that becomes public and thus undeniable.

In light of the foregoing, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran fears that, in a not too distant future, the international community will be faced with yet other situations that will give cause for the expression of indignation over other Taliban crimes, which, unlike crimes committed against civilians in northern Afghanistan, cannot be hidden from international attention. In this context and on the basis of the statement on Afghanistan by the President of the Security Council on 15 September 1998 (S/PRST/1998/22), I request that the Security Council urgently adopt effective measures, under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, to take all necessary measures, including the dispatch of a mission to stop mass killing of civilians in northern Afghanistan, secure the release of Iranian nationals held captive in Afghanistan, demand that the murderers of the Iranian diplomats in Mazar-e-Sharif are brought to justice, condemn the attack, occupation and looting of the Consulate-General and Cultural House of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Bamyan and prosecute the perpetrators.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is making every effort to resolve these problems through diplomatic channels and hopes that, by the adoption of resolute and effective measures on the part of the Security Council, peace and security may be restored in the region without the need for further action.

I shall be grateful if you could have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 147.

(*Signed*) Hadi **Nejad-Hosseinian**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative